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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 003533

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PHUM PREL KMPI YM EU HUMAN RIGHTS

SUBJECT: CHARGE DREYER: YEMEN WILL RECEIVE DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

REF: SANAA 2160

Classified By: CDA Nabeel Khoury for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. During a December 7 meeting with Ambassador, European Commission (EC) CDA to Yemen, Ralph Dreyer, revealed that the EC intends to implement democracy and human rights programming in Yemen starting in 2007. Dreyer also informed Ambassador that the EC and other European missions have begun to more aggressively push the ROYG for democratic reform than in the past. End Summary.

EC Expects to Donate USD 70 Million Through 2009

2. (C) On December 7, Dreyer updated Ambassador on the EC's expected Yemen aid package, which he anticipated would amount to 60-70 million Euro (USD 70-82 million) through 2009. Dreyer anticipated that the EC would approve between 60-70 million Euro. Dreyer emphasized that funding through the EC's National Indicative Program (NIP), would begin in 2007 and go through 2009 and would concentrate on human rights, democratic reform, and corruption. Dreyer noted that the 2007-2009 funding package would have a more concentrated focus than previous years, the EC having learned that, "it was not beneficial to water every tree."

3. (C) Dreyer speculated that approximately 1.5-3 million Euro (USD 1.7-3.5 million) would be allocated to parliamentary capacity building in a program that would work closely with political parties and MPs. Another 10 million Euro would likely supplement current UNDP programming with local and commercial courts. He noted that all projects would have human rights and -- where applicable -- corruption facets, and emphasized that the EC would coordinate with donors on any current projects in the country. "We hope to be able to find good local partners," he added.

4. (C) Dreyer pointed out that the funding would be in addition to the current 30 million Euro (USD 35 million) 2005-2006 Yemen NIP package, which is being spent through MOPIC and relevant ministries on rural and agricultural development, maternal health, social funds, and fisheries. From the current allocation, two million Euro (USD 2.3 million) has been given to the Ministry of Human Rights to help build a civil society network.

Euros Begin to Show Signs of Frustration

5. (C) Turning to another matter, Dreyer observed that the EC and other European missions were beginning to take a harder line when dealing with the ROYG on democracy and corruption. "We will be more direct with them than in the past," he noted. He revealed that the EC will deliver to the ROYG two "strongly worded" demarches (one on the rollback in press freedoms and the death penalty and the other on Yemen's stalled democratization efforts) in the near future. In reply to Ambassador's inquiry on whether the EC was willing to go public with its views, Dreyer replied that although the Europeans have started to press the ROYG, it was too early to tell. "We tended to be too kind in the past," he observed. "Yemen has made some good achievements but it is time to let them know that more needs to be done," he concluded.

6. (C) Comment: The EC's proposed new package, coupled with Dreyer's statements indicate that the Europeans finally have taken note of Yemen's stalled progress on reform. There are other indications. After Ambassador's painted remarks on democracy in the October 6 "Al-Ayam" interview (reftel), the British Ambassador in his own interview with the English language government-affiliated weekly Yemen Observer publicly stated that when it came to democracy, more than "just elections" needed to be done. On December 9, the UK, German, and Dutch missions joined post for an Ambassadorial level meeting in order to formulate a list of benchmarks for reform that the ROYG can meet in the next six months (septel). Post welcomes these actions and hopes that with the Europeans' added participation, the ROYG will realize the importance of continuing on its path to democratic reform. End Comment.
Khoury